

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Maxwell to lead Mississippi conference

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) — Leadership expert John C. Maxwell, founder and president of The Injoy Group in Norcross, Ga., will bring his national Reality Leadership conference to Ridgecrest Church, Madison, on October 19. Co-sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), the conference features a special rate for members of churches affiliated with the convention.

The Reality Leadership conference has enjoyed large crowds during the 2001 national tour, with stops in cities from Tampa to Los Angeles to Detroit.

"Mississippi Baptists are pleased to welcome to our state John Maxwell, one of the nation's foremost conference speakers on leadership," said Steve Stone, MBCB associate executive director for church ministries.

"Before we agreed to co-sponsor the Reality Leadership conference, I talked with several pastors, church staffers, and associational missions directors. Without exception, each said we should invite John Maxwell to come to Mississippi."

"I am pleased that we could work out a time for John to come. All Mississippi Baptists are invited to join us for this exciting one-day conference," Stone said.

Maxwell, 54, is a former senior pastor who holds a doctor of ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.; a master of divinity degree from Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, Calif.; and a bachelor of arts in theology degree from Circleville Bible College in his hometown of Circleville, Ohio.

He has written 21 books, including *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* and *The Right to Lead*. Two of his books — *Failing Forward: Turning Your Failures Into Stepping Stones for Success* and *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of*



Maxwell

Leadership — earned spots on the New York Times business best seller's list.

Maxwell's Reality Leadership conference consists of four sessions, in which Maxwell is joined by:

- ◆ Brad Powell, pastor of Northridge Church, Detroit, for Session One: *Influencing Change*.

- ◆ Karen Ford, director for a national sales company, for Session Two: *Developing Leaders*.

- ◆ a speaker to be announced for Session Three: *Resolving Conflict*.

- ◆ Kevin Myers, pastor of Crossroads Community Church near Atlanta, for Session Four: *Making the Tough Call*.

A case study will also be presented entitled, *Three for the Price of One*, with William Hinson, senior pastor of First Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.

A special rate is available for Mississippi Baptist Convention members. To receive the special \$79 sponsor rate, the discount code "MBC" must be given at time of registration. The special rate includes all conference materials.

To register for the conference, call toll-free (800) 333-6506, or register online at www.injoy.com/realityleadership. No registrations can be accepted at the Baptist Building in Jackson.

After registering, participants will be given special access to a portion of the Injoy web site called I-Trade, where ideas and discussions are exchanged on the conference topics.

Ridgecrest Church is located on Old Canton Road in Madison. To reach the church from Interstate 55, take the Madison exit and turn east. Go across the railroad tracks and straight through the intersection of Main Street and Highway 51. At the intersection of Main Street and Old Canton Road, turn south.

The church is approximately one mile on the right past Madison-Ridgeland Academy and across from the Madison airport.

The church telephone number is (601) 853-1090.

"Spiritual leadership begins and ends when a person discovers the heart of God. The prophet Jeremiah said, 'And you shall seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart' (Jer. 29:13)."

"Once a leader finds the heart of God, then leadership skills need to be developed. John Maxwell will provide for us ways to discover God's heart and supply proven practical leadership skills that will grow and expand in becoming effective spiritual leaders," said Stone.

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WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

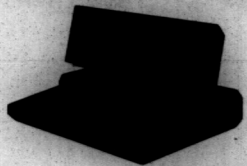
Directions

SWBTS music prof retires

'See You at the Pole' set

Sunday School lessons

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Our Mississippi Baptist campgrounds

A recent visit to Central Hills Retreat, our Mississippi Baptist Royal Ambassadors (RA) campground outside Kosciusko, for the dedication of the new William "Bill" Causey Missions and Activity Center took me back 35 years to the special place in my heart reserved for fond memories of summer RA camp.

RA camp was at a different place then — Camp Kittiwake on the Gulf Coast was obliterated by Hurricane Camille in 1969, never to be rebuilt — but the location really wasn't important.

A long trip was required to reach Camp Kittiwake from the Mississippi Delta, down the tortuously winding, old pre-four lane Highway 49 through Yazoo City and Jackson and Hattiesburg and, finally, the Gulf Coast — but that wasn't really important either.

As every card-carrying Mississippian knows, it gets hot here in the summer and even more so on the Coast. Kittiwake was humid and unairconditioned, and the mosquitoes were big enough to share your soft drink with you — but that too was not all that important.

There were the crafts times and the frantic dashes across busy Highway 90 to reach the beachfront. There was the food, camp food to be sure but for a boy who was, ahem, large for his age, it was great — but, as you may have surmised by now, even that was not important.

What was (and still is) important are the lessons I learned about Jesus, about missionaries, about my role in spreading the Gospel, and about myself. Thirty-five years later, I vividly recall my counselors' names and the nightly worship services.

In my mind I still see my friends standing up and walking down front to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. I remember kneeling to pray with them, as if it were yesterday.



Causey Center at Central Hills Retreat, Kosciusko

Those summer RA camps went a long way toward making me the Christian I am today: an unashamed witness to the salvation found in Jesus Christ, a Sunday School teacher, an RA leader, and editor of the third-largest newspaper in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Multiply that testimony many thousands of times over for the three Mississippi Baptist campgrounds — the other two being Camp Garaywa, our Girls in Action (GA) campground in Clinton, and Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian — and one gets an idea of the importance of these facilities to the future of Mississippi Baptists.

If you haven't been to the campgrounds lately, you haven't been to the campgrounds.

Millions of dollars of construction and refurbishing have been going on for several years now, in an effort to better serve Mississippi Baptists.

Camp Garaywa has Patterson Place, a

motel-like conference center that rivals any meeting facility in central Mississippi. Gulfshore Assembly has undergone a comprehensive makeover, crowned by a new 340-foot pier reaching out into the Gulf of Mexico. Central Hills Retreat has the aforementioned Causey Center and two new air-conditioned lodges.

All of this has occurred while regular maintenance and projects such as paving have also been accomplished. Much of the work was done by volunteers.

Mississippi Baptist campgrounds have a bright future, full of excited campers eager to know more about Jesus and the art of summer camping. Thanks to the construction, there is plenty of space for adult meetings, too.

Check out our campgrounds; you'll be surprised. You'll also get a deeper understanding of how serious Mississippi Baptists are when we say we're on a mission to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

GUEST OPINION:

MLSMO: responding to people in crisis

By Donna Swarts, member
Goodwater Church, Magee

whom he sends us. Oftentimes those people may be adults who need a listening ear, a young person who needs a hug, or a baby who needs a diaper

change. They could even be the volunteers serving beside you.

TECC is just one arm of Mississippi Baptist disaster relief supported by gifts to MLSMO. It

Tropical Storm Allison moved through Louisiana in the weeks prior to June 16, 2001, leaving the Baton Rouge area flooded with as much as four to six feet of water in some homes.

The water receded as fast as it rose, and people were desperate for help. Once again, the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit's Temporary Emergency Child Care (TECC) Unit was called for assistance.

Without gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering (MLSMO), however, there might not have been a response to cries for help. MLSMO helps fund both the Disaster Relief Unit and TECC.

As the TECC coordinator, I prepared to leave for Baton Rouge. My Scripture for that day was John 13:20: *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives me receives Him who sent Me.*

That passage is a true reflection of our Mississippi TECC operation. Fourteen Mississippi Baptist volunteers, all with different personalities and diverse backgrounds, went to Baton Rouge to serve in Jesus' name.

Because of the love Jesus gave us, we are sent to love those to

is another tool to be used of God to show the world his love by offering hope in a crisis.

On the third day of the Baton Rouge operation, we were caring for 40 children. As I sat in a corner playing with three young boys, I was amazed at the wisdom God provides in times of crisis.

I watched as volunteer Joan Tyler, a member of First Church, Collins, shared Jesus with a young Buddhist mother. Babies were rocked, snacks were served, and books were read aloud.

I saw Bible after Bible disappear from the registration table. I listened as workers from other relief agencies expressed appreciation for Mississippi Baptists.

Tears trickled down my face as the thought of the love of God. He is to be glorified!!

Why do we do what we do? The answer is we do it because God first loved us that we may know his love in order to love others unconditionally.

During this Season of Prayer for State Missions, please don't forget to pray for the many volunteers serve tirelessly with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit.

Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for your gifts to MLSMO so that this much-needed ministry can continue.



Research underway on 'amazing' Maasai

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Eric Graf worked feverishly to unearth his mission team's jeep, mired in the mud of the Kenyan bush. The knowledge of abundant lions and approaching dusk and rainstorms were generating more frustration than evangelistic fervor.

Suddenly, the roar of engines interrupted his group's automobile recovery effort. Speeding towards them, internationally renowned World Rally race cars spurted through the waterlogged road like frogs in a bog.

Graf pulled out his camera and began snapping pictures. Eventually those photos, accompanied with a Gospel-centered story on the race, appeared in a Kenyan newspaper, as well as on several international race Internet sites.

However, the key redemptive moments from Graf's July 13-Aug. 2 mission trip took place among the Maasai people.

Graf, a doctoral student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., participated in a medical/evangelism mission trip with Calvary Road Ministries and experienced stirring movements of God throughout the group's time in Kenya.

The task of the nine-member team was daunting. The seminomadic, pastoral people, who number more than a million in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, have many physical needs — illustrated by the fact that some walked 20-25 miles to receive free medical care from the clinic.

"Our medical team saw almost 1,100 patients in nine days," said Graf, from



REACHING THE MAASAI — Eric Graf (center) poses with two Maasai men who prayed to receive Christ. Graf, who served as a volunteer member with the Calvary Road Ministries medical/evangelism team this summer, spent more than three weeks in Kenya ministering to the Maasai people. (BP photo)

Indianapolis. "[About] \$90,000 worth of medicine was donated by various corporations, most of which was used during this time."

However, the team also and most importantly ministered to the peoples' greatest need: the Gospel.

"We shared the Gospel with each person who came to the clinic," Graf said. "Some 167 of those were recorded to have placed their faith in Christ."

"Similar to our own American church context, only the Lord knows which of these responses were done out of genuine faith and repentance. However, I can testify that many Maasai people are being drawn to Jesus Christ in a very powerful, convincing way."

The Maasai's response is particularly remarkable consider-

ing their history. They are a culturally proud people and until recently have been very resistant to any outside influence, especially the Gospel, Graf said.

However, in 1972 the first Southern Baptist missionary began working with the Maasai, helping to transform their perception of Christianity from a "white man's religion" to the universal "good news" of Jesus Christ, Graf said.

"God is doing amazing things among the Maasai people," Graf said. "The majority of believers are first-generation Christians. The churches are all in infancy-to-beginning stages."

Yet, even though young, the churches are thriving — so much, in fact, that the International Mission Board has named the Maasai as the featured people group of this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

The tremendous growth of the churches and the accompanying church planting movement begun among the Maasai also gave Graf a second purpose for the trip.

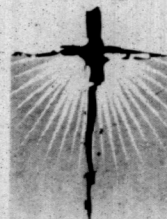
Working with International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries at the agency's request, Graf began some initial work on a pilot research project aimed toward evaluating and facilitating a church planting movement among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania.

"We're doing a comprehensive research project on what God has done in the Maasai community — why hundreds of thousands of them have come to Christ in the past 20 years," Graf said.

Graf will soon put what he learned during this initial research project to good use. Next summer, he will lead a team of six Southern Seminary students who will spend seven weeks interviewing some 600-700 Maasai.

Graf can testify firsthand that time spent among the Maasai will be life-changing.

"Meeting the Maasai Christians, pastors and evangelists will deeply affect your life," Graf said. "They have been called out and are being used by God to build the church in remote, pioneering areas."



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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NAMB volunteers linked

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Matching volunteers with areas where their services are needed has become significantly easier thanks to a new Internet-based system operated by the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Where just a few years ago the process of identifying needs and matching them with volunteers and groups could take months, it now can be accomplished with just a few clicks on the NAMB Volunteer Mobilization Information System (VMISO) website. The site — located at volunteers.namb.net — serves as a clearinghouse for both volunteers looking for places to serve and directors of missions and other leaders who post opportunities. The website is the culmination of efforts since NAMB's founding in 1997 to streamline the process of matching mission volunteers with needs across the country. With the new system, churches with a need for volunteers for construction, prayerwalking, Vacation Bible School or other ministries can contact their director of missions, who is authorized to directly submit the need on the VMISO site, or those needing volunteers can post their projects directly. The system will automatically notify their association and state convention. Individual volunteers and churches, meanwhile, can register on the site and see all needs that fit their profile of skills and abilities. To become a member of the VMISO, churches or individuals seeking volunteers can visit the site at www.volunteers.namb.net. To submit a project in which volunteers are needed, churches should contact their associational director of missions or state volunteer mobilization leaders if they do not have Internet access.

Looking back

10 years ago

Communism's crash in the rapidly disintegrating Soviet Union triggers the Foreign Mission Board's first "Green Alert" to seize missions opportunities amid social upheaval. "We need to do as much as we can as soon as we can," says Keith Parks, board president.

20 years ago

Fifteen men from ten churches in George-Greene Association plus one man each from Colorado and California — all volunteers — build the multipurpose building for First Church, Springville, Calif., on five hot summer days in that state.

50 years ago

A letter in The Baptist Record reads, in part, "Laymen should compare the income of their pastors with that of the bricklayers and carpenters and see if they can't raise the pastors to a status equal to that of the mechanic or craftsman."

'Christy' producer lists war heroes in novel

PACIFIC PALISADES, Calif. (BP) — Since he wrote *Sea of Glory* to honor all who contributed to the Allies' World War II victory, Ken Wales expects his first book to receive notice as part of upcoming Veterans Day observances.

The longtime filmmaker hopes the story's central figures — four army chaplains who sacrificed their lives aboard a sinking troop ship — will be remembered year-round.

"I'm hoping and praying that those who read it can grasp from the four chaplains that the ultimate act of giving up one's life so that someone else might live is a direct example of what Christ did for us," said Wales, producer of the Christy television series.

"That four men — three Christians and a rabbi — would choose to give of their lives so four other men could live is a remarkable sacrifice. This wasn't an accident. They made a choice to give up their life jackets," he pointed out.

Released in September by Broadman & Holman, the trade book publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, the novel is based on a true story of the 1943 sinking of the *Dorchester*.

A domestic vessel, the ship was pressed into service as part of a top-secret mission to install radar systems in Greenland. However, 90 miles away from their destination, a German submarine torpedoed the ill-equipped ship.

Less than one-fourth of the 900 people on board survived the attack.

According to survivors' accounts, a panic followed. Because of overcrowded, overheated conditions, many had removed

their life jackets and couldn't retrieve them in the rush for survival.

Amid the confusion, the four chaplains removed their life jackets and handed them to others. Then they joined hands and sang hymns as the ship sank.

The chaplains included Methodist minister George Fox, Dutch Reformed minister Clark Poling, Catholic priest John Washington and Rabbi Alex Goode.

Clark Poling was a cousin of David Poling, coauthor of *Sea of Glory*. A retired minister, David Poling met Wales while both were researching a book. They agreed to collaborate on the novel.

Wales' father was a classmate of Clark Poling's at Yale Divinity School. First hearing of the four chaplains at age 10, Wales promised to continue sharing the story in the future.

When he received his copy of the novel, Wales took it to his father's favorite beach at Santa Monica. There he remembered his dad's admonition to never let people forget the story.

"I had a time of prayer and re-read the book and finished it just as the sun set," Wales recalled. "It was a joy to have that reconnection."

The primary reason for the fictional approach was to demonstrate the event's impact. While more than 200 men survived, no one who received a chaplain's life jacket ever came forward, Wales said.

So, he created Wesley Adams, a hard-bitten sergeant whose attitude undergoes a remarkable transformation after he receives Father Washington's jacket.

The book opens and closes with Adams' reflections at a mythical soldiers' reunion.

"You can see it through the eyes of Wesley Adams and how it affected him," said Wales, who teaches a class in film production at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

"I'm mainly a storyteller. It's told in a

visual way; that's an occupational hazard for a filmmaker. You can see it in the film, when he looks up," he said.

Despite the reference to a movie, none exists yet. Wales is negotiating with two motion picture firms who don't want to be identified. He hopes to produce a film version within the next two years.

In addition to their heroic sacrifice, Wales said it is important to recognize the chaplains' contributions to the troops during the two weeks prior to the attack.

"There was already a lot of life-saving going on before the ship sank," he said. "They showed them life lessons and helped them straighten out their lives by being with them."

"That helps make the chaplains' deaths not in vain."

Still, after reading *Sea of Glory*, some may question why Uncle Sam sent such a vessel through the dangerous waters known as Torpedo Junction.

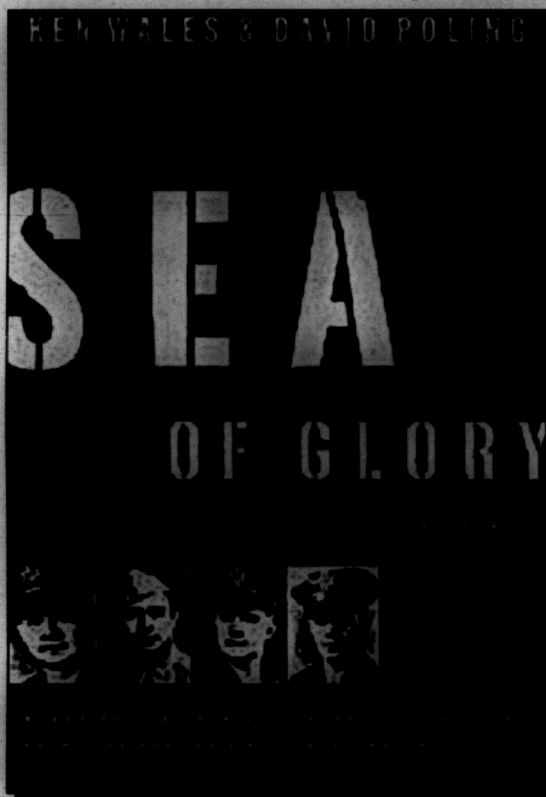
Wales pointed out that Germany's continual, successful attacks on Allied ships in 1941-42 left the outcome of the war in doubt.

Sending the *Dorchester* and similar ships out was a desperate move, he said, which ultimately paid off with the development of radar and B-24 bombers that helped turn the tide.

"This was a classic struggle of good and evil," Wales said. "This was a war we had to win. Otherwise, Germany would have controlled the East Coast and Japan the West Coast, and there would have been a big struggle somewhere around Omaha."

Every American can all be grateful that the nation remains free, Wales said, and able to commemorate the bravery of men like chaplains Poling, Fox, Washington, and Goode.

For more information on Wales' book, visit LifeWay Christian Stores on the Internet at www.lifewaystores.com or call toll-free at (800) 233-1123.



LifeWay slates 'KidsJam' for September 15

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — LifeWay Christian Stores across the United States — including stores in Jackson and Tupelo — will host a free party for children on Sept. 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The premiere of a new VeggieTales video, "The Ultimate VeggieTales Silly Song Countdown," will be featured in the stores throughout the day. Employee-supervised games and activities, prizes and gifts also will be provided.

Children and their families are invited to participate in a special in-store scavenger hunt activity during the party, said John McKinney, local-store marketing manager for the national chain. In addition, many limited-time offers will be available, including a special sale price on the new VeggieTales video.

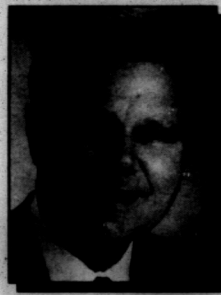
LifeWay Christian Stores may be accessed on the Internet at www.lifewaystores.com or toll-free at (800) 233-1123.

MARGARET LACKEY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Make a Difference Day continues to grow in scope and significance. Only a few years old, the idea is to do something one day in October that will make a difference in someone's life or in the community. All kinds of projects and ideas have become a part of Make a Difference Day.

As Mississippi Baptists, in the month of September, we can make a difference through an offering that, literally for thousands and thousands of people, has made a difference through the years. The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is not just a gift of the moment, but an offering for an eternity.

Some years ago, a man who was a member of the church I was pastoring at the time, came to me and expressed his views about the state mission offering. He did not like it and he was not going to give to it! He said, "It is just another way to get money out of folks." He wanted me, his Sunday School class members, and strangers on the street, if they would stop and listen, to know that he did not believe in giving to the state mission offering.



My reply to him, at that moment was that was not the purpose of the offering at all — just to get people to give more. Later, though, I had to confess to him that he was right. It is a special offering over and above just the norm, and it is a channel of giving that funds mission points that are otherwise untouched — unless we go "above and beyond."

The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is vital and it has certainly grown through the years. Named for the first corresponding secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Mississippi, the first offering was in 1935, and it totaled \$6,132.41.

Last year, for the first time, we broke the one million dollar mark in special giving to state missions. Now, the reality is that no one has to give to this offering — not an individual and not a church. You can ignore it and pass right on by. Yes, the offer-

Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

ing may be diminished because you do not give, but the greater loss will be to you.

Somewhere along the journey of the next 12 months, more than likely, directly or just slightly indirectly, you will probably be the recipient of some blessing from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. If not you, then someone closely connected to you, will be touched, helped, or changed by this offering.

You see, when we don't give, we are the ones who miss the blessing. Just what do you miss if you do not give? You will miss:

- being a part of the hundreds of girls at Camp Garaywa and the boys at Central Hills who come to know Jesus as Savior each summer.
- providing a missions encounter for thousands of kids at these encampments.
- the satisfaction of knowing that you made it possible for Mississippi Baptists to be

among the first on the scene helping in Jesus' name whenever disaster strikes.

- the delight of providing mission opportunities and outreach to Internationals on college campuses.
- the joy over a new church start, or helping a church get back on its feet after a fire, or other destruction.

• the blessing of being involved in prison ministries, in jails and prisons across the state, where most of us do not and often cannot go.

If you do not give, others may miss out on something, but you will miss a lot of blessings. What can you do? You can:

- **Celebrate.** God has opened many doors and is doing wonderful things among his people. Mississippi Baptists have reason to celebrate!
 - **Participate.** Prayers, provisions, and people make missions come to life.
 - **Perpetuate.** The blessings God has sent among us can be passed on to generations beyond us.
- Pray that all across our state the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering will not just be another way that God can get hold of our money, but that it will be a significant way he can get hold of each one of us!

Woman utilizes gifts on captive audience

MOORE, Okla. (BP) — Polly Ward goes to prison every Monday night.

It's not because she committed a crime, but because she has a commitment.

Ward admits when she was told she would be good at prison ministry, she was mortified.

"I told my husband I knew nothing about prisons, nor anyone in them," Ward said. "His nonchalant reply was, 'Why would you be upset? You'd have a captive audience.'"

Ward's journey into prison ministry began when she enrolled in a discipleship course on spiritual gifts at First Church, Moore, Okla.

"I already knew what my spiritual gifts were," Ward said, "but I guess I thought, or hoped, they might change."

Her gifts, she said, are prophecy, exhortation, and mercy, and since prophecy and exhortation are very outspoken, it's hard for a woman to find a place to serve under authority with those spiritual gifts.

"Out of approximately 15 women in the class, I was the only one with these gifts," she said. "I was feeling sorry for myself when the pastor's wife, who was teaching the class, said I would be excellent in prison ministry."

Ward said over the next couple of years, she volunteered for all sorts of jobs at church, but kept seeing things, even commercials on TV, that led her to think about women in prison.

"Through our pastor's messages, I saw that Jesus didn't minister inside the four walls of the church," she said.

She said she had no idea what she would do in prison, and had never heard of anyone going into a prison to minister.

Several years ago she proceeded to call Don Duncan, the chaplain at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in Oklahoma City and said, "God is sort of directing me to work in prison."

She told the chaplain she had worked in literacy missions and wondered if that experience could be put to use.

The chaplain said a woman had just come to him telling him she would never go back to Bible study because she was called on to read, and couldn't.

"I've been praying for a volunteer to teach literacy courses," he told Ward.

Thus the prison doors swung open, and Polly Ward entered into a ministry of love



POLLY GOES TO PRISON — Polly Ward (left) joins fellow Baptist prison volunteers (from left) Delena Blackwood, Willeen Hodge, and Susan Fox in preparing to enter Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in Oklahoma City. (Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger)

and compassion, learning a lot about prisons and those incarcerated there.

"One thing about prison is you have to adjust to change," she said. "Rules and circumstances change daily."

She noted some of the requirements for working in a prison ministry entail—first of all, being a born-again Christian, and you should not go without your spouse's approval.

She said Mabel Bassett is a prison for any woman who has any kind of medical problem, so volunteer workers must have regular tuberculosis tests, plus an FBI check, orientations, agree to follow the rules, and must

harshly," she said. "I can't say we go in and do just one thing. We have to minister to their needs."

She added, "Anytime you want to read God's Word, he will help you learn."

Ward, who is now a member of Woodland Church, Newcastle, Okla., explained that Oklahoma has more women in prison than any other state.

"The average age at Mabel Bassett is 35, and [the] education level is fifth grade," she said. "Most of the women have left children who either went to live with relatives or are in Department of Human Services custody."

The number one offense is

have two badges: one to turn in at the door and the other to wear while in the facility.

Ward entered literacy training with Prison Fellowship, but says literacy is more than teaching prisoners to read and write.

"It is modeling positive behavior and being a friend they may not have ever had, who doesn't judge them

murder, followed by drug offenses, robbery, assault and fraud, with the population split about 50/50 in violent and non-violent crimes.

Ward said all of the prisoners she works with are Christians, and most say prison is the best thing that happened to them because it stopped them from doing what they were doing and got them on the right track.

Ward is teaching the inmates to read and write through Bible classes, mostly studies by noted author and Bible teacher Beth Moore.

Ward said Satan "doesn't want us to go into places of darkness — and prisons are areas of darkness."

She said she has never felt threatened or afraid.

"If we as believers don't do what we are called to do, we will never see a decrease in the prison population," Ward said, noting generational incarceration keeps the cycle going.

Ward said with an average of 30 babies born to inmates each year, she feels led to give each baby a Bible suitable for the caregiver to read to the baby.

Ward noted that one of the satisfactions of prison ministries is seeing the women change.

"One of the girls we worked with is now in fulltime ministry," Ward said. "She was first director of a halfway house and now is directing youth programs for three Methodist churches."

"I would like to see more women get involved in prison ministry instead of staying in church and doing Bible studies."

"We have to go where the hurting people are," she said.

LifeWay to change address

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Effective Oct. 1, the primary mailing address for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention will become One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234.

The change, approved by the Nashville-area postmaster general, accompanies the construction of a new main entrance and parking garage for LifeWay, scheduled for completion in late 2002.

The main entrance and visitor parking will be north of the present entrance, off Ninth Avenue near Church Street.

Broadman & Holman Publishers and Genevox Music will continue to use 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, TN 37234, as their address.



JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs and RAs of West Heights Church, Pontotoc

A recognition service was recently held for GAs and RAs of West Heights Church, Pontotoc. Carol Gillespie is WMU director. David Hamilton is pastor.



Sixty-one mission team members from ten different churches journeyed to Sonora, Mexico, May 25-June 2, to minister in the villages of La Nariz, Valdez, and Division of the North. The ministry included conducting nightly worship services, Vacation Bible School, evangelism, construction work, and distribution of food and eyeglasses. A total of nine decisions were made for the Lord. Churches represented included Bethlehem and Freedom, Laurel; North Columbia, East Columbia, and Edna, Columbia; Clarkson, Maben; New Hope, Monticello; First and Easthaven, Brookhaven; and Living Water, Hazlehurst.

Youth of Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol, attended Certrifuge in July at Gulfshore Assembly.

A Bible Conference will be held at Hebron Church, Pheba, Sept. 26-30. The times are Wed.-Sat., 7 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. The speaker will be Roy E. Gingrich of Memphis. He is a former pastor and Bible college professor who has written books on every book of the Bible. R. C. Bryan is pastor. For additional information, call (662) 494-2377.

Members of DeSoto Church, Shubuta, participated in a mission ministry to Greenbriar Church, Boonsboro, Md., June 23-July 1. The ministry included building repair and painting, assisting with Vacation Bible School, and visitation. Pictured (from left, front row) are Lois Smith; Sidney Mosley; Jessica Crowell; Krystal Diamond; Crystal Gandy; Krystin Brown; Grant Odom; (second row) Mike and Jennifer Crowell; Mary Mosley; Marsha Odom; Daniel Mosley; Drew Dabbs, youth minister; Mark Manasco; and Ray Mosley. Not pictured are Jim Smith, pastor; Dewayne, June, and Ashley Crane; Billy Gene, Nita, and Joey Glass; Earnestine and Richard Owen; Laura Latner, mission coordinator; and Billy and Catherine Whitaker, work project leaders.



Youth of Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol



Mission team from DeSoto Church, Shubuta

South Mississippi Evangelism Conference First Baptist Church ♦ Gulfport, MS Monday, September 17

11:00 A.M.

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Tommy Mitchell, Director of Missions

Gulf Coast Baptist Association

6:30 P.M.

Fred Luter, pastor

Franklin Ave. Baptist Church

New Orleans, LA

Vice-President of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1996-1997

Member, SBC Council on the Family

Tom Elliff, pastor

First Southern Baptist Church

Del City, OK

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Mullan, Ray, Crosswhite, and Church

Deacon ordination services were held on Aug. 12 at Liberty Hill Church, Pope. Pictured are Al Mullan, interim pastor; Elbert Ray, Roger Crosswhite, and

Ray Church, new deacons.

Tony Stroud, former pastor of Calvary Church, Perry Association, is available for pastorate or interim work. He can be contacted at (601) 788-6218 or (601) 408-3934; E-mail GODFILLED7@aol.com.

Samuel Gardner Rankin, 86, a native of Sandy Hook, Miss., died July 21 at his home in Oak Ridge, Tenn. He was a retired medical missionary,

having served in both China and Hong Kong. Rankin was married to Miriam Elizabeth Thomas Rankin from 1946 until her death in 1985. He is survived by Irene Daniel Keller Rankin, his wife of 15 years; daughters, Harriet Ann White, Armuchee, Ga., and Margaret Ellen Downie, Bogart, Ga.; son, Samuel Edward Rankin, Winston-Salem, N.C.; sister,

Annie Lou Pope, Mandeville, La.; brother, Charles Paul Rankin, Columbia; and five grandchildren.

A. V. Bailey, 80, died Aug. 29 in Tupelo. Funeral services were held August 31 with burial in Tupelo Memorial Park. He was a native of Calhoun County. A retired minister, Bailey formerly pastored several churches in

Lee and Webster counties before retiring in 1995. He was a member of Mt. Vernon Church. Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Alice Raper Bailey of Tupelo; daughter, Barbara Young, Tupelo; son, Howard Bailey, Tupelo; sister, Clemmie Brown, Calhoun City; brother, Sherrill Bailey, Winona; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

STAFF CHANGES



Morgan, Keyes, and Van Cleave

First Church, Richton, recently called **Don Morgan** as minister of music. Pictured (from left) are Morgan; Buddy Keyes, pastor; and Brad Van Cleave, minister of youth.

Paul E. Robertson, a native of Jackson, has resigned at New Orleans Seminary, effective Aug. 26. He served on the faculty for 15 years, most recently as professor of theology and director of research doctoral programs. Robertson has joined Christian Health Ministries in New Orleans with the specific assignment of coordinator of pastoral care at East Jefferson General Hospital, Metairie, La.

Bay Vista Church, Biloxi, has called **Josh Parker** as youth minister effective Sept. 1. Parker, former youth pastor of Faithview Church, Saucier, is currently pursuing an education degree and plans to attend seminary. A welcoming reception will be held following the evening service on Sunday, Sept. 16.

Tom Stevens, pastor of Lena Church, Lena, for eight years, has resigned effective Sept. 30. He is moving to Laurel, Md., and will become pastor of Faith Church.

REVIVAL DATES

Furrs, Pontotoc: Sept. 23-27; 7 p.m.; Ben Parman, Booneville, evangelist; Gerald Waldrop, music; Joe Herndon, pastor.

Springfield, Natchez: Sept. 16-19; Sunday, Sunday School 9:45 a.m., 11 a.m. service followed by covered dish lunch, Discipleship Training, 6 p.m., and worship 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed Wright, Morgantown Church, evangelist; Griff Toney, Springfield Church, music; Gene Rowland, pastor.

Central, Little Yazoo: Sept. 16-19; Sunday, 10 a.m. service with lunch to follow; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim Futral, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist.

Unity, Leakesville: Sept. 16-19; 7 p.m.; The Hill Family, music and message; Walter Mixon, pastor.

Cedarview, Olive Branch: Sept. 30-Oct. 3; Sunday, 10:30 a.m., noon meal, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed Newton, Bartlett, Tenn., evangelist; Broken, music ministry team, Faith Church, Bartlett, Tenn., music.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: Sept. 16-20; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; John Merck, evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, music.

Antioch, Union: Sept. 23-26; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, Little Rock, evangelist; Wayne Bishop, Antioch Church, music; James E. Young, pastor.

New Providence, Carthage: Sept. 16; worship, 10 a.m.; business meeting, 11 a.m.; lunch and fellowship, 11:30 a.m.; Bob Gross, speaker; Smith Sanders, pastor.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: Oct. 28; 9:45 a.m.-4 p.m.; dinner on the ground and gospel singing; Richard Crews, guest speaker.

Antioch, Union: Sept. 30; 75th anniversary; 11 a.m.; 1:30 p.m., The Wilburns, Nashville, Tenn., in concert; Kermitt Sharp, Philadelphia, guest speaker; James E. Young, pastor.

Mt. Vernon, Tupelo: Sept. 16-19; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Marty Comer, Lexington, Tenn., evangelist; William Riley, Tupelo, music; R. Owen Riddick, pastor.

Lincoln Road, Hattiesburg: Sept. 21-23; Fri.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Ernest Sadler, evangelist; L.D. Golmon, pastor.

Sunrise, Carthage: Sept. 23; services begin with Sunday School; Howard Curbow, former pastor, speaker during morning worship hour; lunch served at noon; Frank Smith, pastor.

HOMECOMINGS

See You At The Pole

Wednesday
September 19, 2001

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Retiring SWBTS prof not giving up music

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — In a discipline often controlled by a metronome's ticking, it's not surprising that church music professor C.L. Bass looks forward to a retirement free from the tyranny of tracking time.

However, the time-ticking device Bass wants to free himself from is not the metronome, but the clock.

"Calendars and clocks have dominated my life for 44 years, and so I am going to look forward to the time when that is not the case," said the distinguished professor of music theory and composition and chairman of the music theory department at Southwestern (SWBTS) Seminary in Fort Worth.

He intends to rest, read, and perhaps travel, but the end of his full-time teaching career does not mean the end of his music.

"I have several [composition] projects on the burner already," Bass said, adding that one anthem is due in September.

Bass almost didn't join Southwestern's faculty. In 1977, he was happy as a music professor at his alma mater, Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee.

The persistence of the seminary's music school dean at the time, James McKinney,

and a timely call from friend and Southwestern professor Joe King, which Bass believed to be an answer to prayer, tipped the scales toward Fort Worth.

At Southwestern, his approach to teaching has been to begin with students' interest and then expose them to more styles of music and to help them get the most from their abilities.

"I hope that I have broadened their horizons to see that many kinds of music can be used to praise God," he said.

"I encourage using the best that you have available to offer whatever it is, whatever style. What I've tried to do is teach them how to discern what's good and what's not," he explained.

His aim has been to prepare students to minister with their mind, talent, and heart.

"It would be like the ideal doctor. In a way you want a doctor who is caring but you also want a doctor who is very competent," Bass said.

Bass is a prolific composer and writer. His works include 200 anthems, two short dramas, one book, and three cantatas. His cantata, "We Have Seen the Lord," was

performed by Southwestern's Oratorio Chorus in April. It was the first time the cantata had been played by an orchestra.

Music has been more than Bass' ministry to others — it has ministered to him.

He recounted the despair he felt when his roommate and teaching colleague was killed in a traffic accident.

A high school choral teacher at the time, Bass found consolation in music. He wrote what he would later publish as "Cast Thy Burden Upon the Lord."

The music affirmed for him that "God sustains, and he's always there."

Bass thanks his wife, Charlene, who he said allowed him to sit alone "hacking away at the piano" struggling to find a sound that matched the image in his mind.

"I want to thank my wife. Without her, much of what I have done would not have been possible. I'm grateful to her, and I love her very much," Bass said.

As he retires, Bass said he will miss "the joy of explaining the discipline of music to my students," but he intends to continue the fellowship he has with music school colleagues.

"We have a wonderful relationship. We've enjoyed each other, we laugh, we get frustrated," he said.

Bass expects to drop by the music faculty's weekly "stew pot" lunch fellowship and hasn't ruled out teaching as an adjunct professor, but he reminds himself,

"I don't want to be ruled by the clock," he pointed out.



Bass

First, Mendenhall to observe centenary

First Church, Mendenhall, will celebrate a century of ministry on September 23, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and climaxing with dinner on the grounds at noon. Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will deliver the dedicatory address after testimonies by former pastors and staff members.

Chartered by 17 members in 1901 as Mendenhall Church, the name was changed to First Church in 1957. Among the 16 pastors who served the church have been two Mississippi Baptist Convention presidents: J.P. Williams (1926-27) and current president Kermit McGregor.

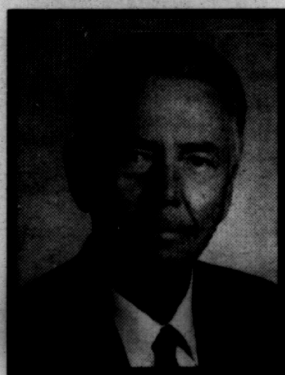
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See You at the Pole: Movement continues

BURLESON, Texas (BP) — What started with a small group of teenagers at a DiscipleNow weekend in early 1990 has grown to phenomenal proportions. The

students, in Burleson, Texas, felt compelled to pray for three different schools one evening. Not knowing exactly what to do, they went to the school flagpoles and prayed for their friends, schools, and leaders.

Other youth leaders in Texas reported similar activities among their groups and together these youth leaders embraced a vision that students throughout Texas would follow these examples and meet at their school flagpoles to pray simultaneously.

The challenge was named See You at the Pole (SYATP) at an early brainstorming session. They shared the vision with 20,000 students in June 1990 at Reunion Arena in Dallas, Texas.

Now, more than three million students from all 50 states and 20 countries participate in SYATP.

This year, See You at the Pole is scheduled for

Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 7 a.m.

The Sunday prior — Challenge Sunday — can be used in churches to build support for the event and to join together in prayer for their local campuses, educators, and students.

Some possible ideas:

- ◆ Use videos in the service to express the passion and emotion of students involved in ministry on their campus.

- ◆ Invite students, youth leaders, teachers, or coaches to give real-life examples of the issues teenagers face without Christ. Let these people also share their impact as a Christian example on the school campus.

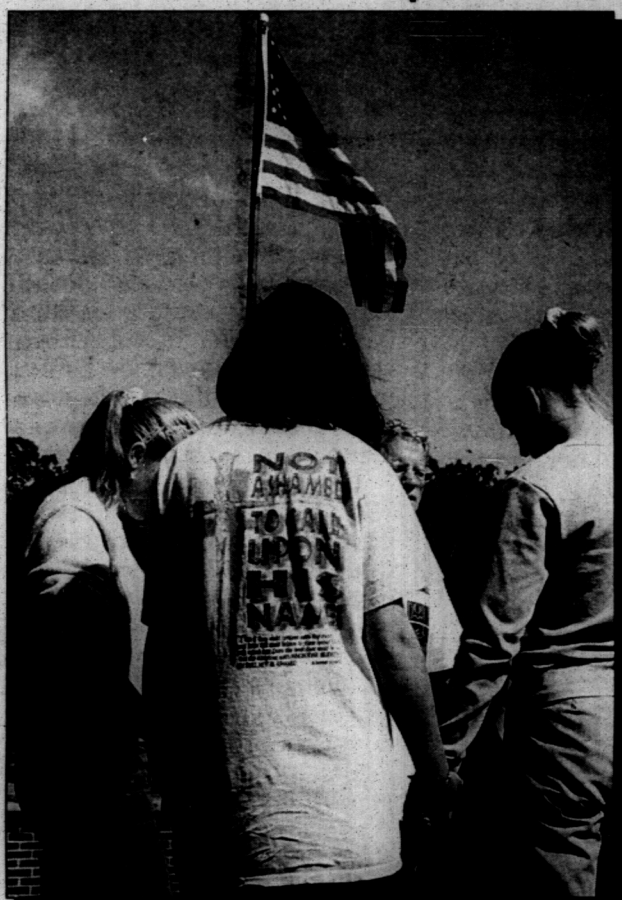
- ◆ Ask students to share testimonies about what God is doing at their school.

- ◆ Include a time of commissioning where students in the service stand or come to the front and ask a church leader to voice a prayer of dedication, spiritual protection, and intercession over the students.

- ◆ Use a church bulletin

to explain and promote See You at the Pole.

For resources and more information, call (817) HIS-PLAN, or visit the website at www.syatp.com.



AT THE POLE — See You at the Pole is scheduled nationwide for Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 7 a.m. (BP photo)

Adult SYATP event planned

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — As students gather around school flagpoles for the annual "See You at the Pole" event Sept. 19, their prayers will have been augmented in many areas by a similar effort by parents and others the night before.

During the Campus Prayer Journey 2001, individuals will walk, ride, or drive around school campuses beginning at 7 p.m. — praying not only for the safety of students, but for God to work supernaturally in the lives of students to lead them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

"This year we're asking the question what can happen when we pray," said Randy Brantley, founder of Campus Prayer Journey and a youth consultant for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

"We're trying to help people get a vision for what can happen when God's people pray for the schools and for the students. ...It's the whole concept of praying down revival from heaven," he said.

"I think we'd like to see every school in a community being prayed for by parents, grandparents, and other adults from the local churches," added Chad Childress, a youth evangelism associate for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Atlanta, which sponsors Campus Prayer Journey nationally.

The event began in 1998 in the wake of the school shootings in Jonesboro, Ark., Brantley said.

The concept caught on and now is part of an overall NAMB campus evangelism strategy that includes the FiSH model for student-led Christian clubs on campuses and the commissioning of students as campus missionaries. More information is available at www.studentz.com.

See You at the Pole is a student-led event in which students gather around the school flagpole at 7 a.m. to pray for their school and their classmates.

It began with Southern Baptist students in Burleson, Texas, and has since become an interdenominational Christian movement.

For more information, visit the www.syatp.com website.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Student Government Association for the 2001-2002 school year at Blue Mountain College are (from left, front row) April Mask, Shannon, president; Ashley Ball, Savannah, Tenn., vice-president; Cristy Turner, Middleton, Tenn., secretary; Andrea Harris, Shannon, treasurer; Laycie Vess, Tishomingo,

senior attorney; and Heather Carpenter, Dumas, junior attorney. (Second row) Betty Hearn, Blue Mountain, faculty representative; Corina McCormick, Imperial, Neb., senior representative; Elizabeth Steele, Mocksville, N. C., junior representative; Wendy Morrison, Ripley, sophomore representative; Felicia Adair, Olive Branch, dormitory representative; Abby Childs, Ripley, commuter representative; and Carolyn Mounce, Ecu, faculty representative.

First-time incoming students at Mississippi College (MC) were treated to a picnic on Aug. 26 on the MC Quad as part of the welcome week activities with Lloyd Roberts, interim president. Following the picnic, Eddie Mahaffey, professor, led in a worship service.

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Welcome Week activities at Mississippi College

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

An ark and an altar

Joshua 3 and 4

By Wayne Marshall

A mom was surprised on her birthday by the unique gift of a rare, exotic, and expensive bird to keep her company. After the bird was delivered and the mom had been given time to acclimate herself to the animal her son called to inquire how she liked her gift. "I loved it," the mom replied. "It was delicious."

Somewhere between the intent of the son and the understanding of the son truth was lost. In our lesson Joshua is given specific instructions for the nation of Israel. These three ideas may prove helpful in understanding their need for obedience and our own.

A lesson in following (3:9-

17). God specifically instructed Joshua concerning the leadership of the ark in crossing the river into Canaan. It was to go first. It was to be followed fully by all of the Israelites. Their focus was to be upon the ark to the extent that they would follow it obediently. Joshua 3:9 reads "hear the words of the Lord."

The word for hear is to both hear and obey. It leaves no doubt as to the importance of strict obedience by God's people.

Their willingness to follow the ark would show one very important strategy as they entered the land. They would know that "the living God is among you." As they saw their

Marshall

new land it was very necessary to get a powerful impression of who their God really was.

He was the Lord of provision as they were receiving the land flowing with milk and honey. He was the Lord of promise as they were getting the land God had promised to give them.

He was also the Lord of problems. If he could part the waters then there would be no problem he would not handle in Canaan.

The picture painted for us is simple. Keep your eyes on Jesus for He will meet your every need.

A lesson in faith (4:15-22). It might have been an easy task to follow the ark if you were right behind the priest and Levites. It took a courageous faith to follow the command of the Lord. (It always does!)

The presence of an altar in the midst of the Jordan (4:9) suggested the worship of the

Lord in the midst of activity that was supernatural, spiritual, and specific. So we see the presence of the Holy Spirit directing our faith today in a world that has chosen to refuse faith and live only by a humanistic sight.

The courageous faith of the Israelites suggests some sobering realities for every believer. First, an altar always signifies a place where one does business with God. That presence in the midst of the Jordan identifies every believer with the desire of God for us. He wants to be our refuge and strength.

Secondly, an altar has a distinct purpose. We often have to use this prompting of the Spirit within to lead us to "setting right" our walk with God. A final observation notes that the price of any altar was death. Dying to self produces a sensitive heart to the leadership of God in our lives.

A lesson in fear (4:23-24). Fear can mean, "to be afraid of" or "to reverence." In this case

the people of God learned how to reverence God.

Joshua's command to them was to keep the altar built. (v. 20). They were always to remember how gracious God had been when they looked at the stones. These stones became a symbol of the operation of God in their midst. As they came and went from Gilgal they always knew that the reality of life was the presence of God.

However the greatest meaning of the stones was that of a witness. In verses 22 and 24 they were to tell their families as well as other people how mighty God is and how much He deserves our surrender, sacrifice, and service.

The ark and the altar go hand-in-hand. Today we follow the ark (Jesus) and bow at the altar (ministry of God's Spirit). By doing so we keep our walk specific and understandable.

Marshall is pastor of Longview Heights Church in Olive Branch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Faithful servants

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

By Dell Scoper

In this week's lesson, Paul commends the Thessalonian believers for their acceptance of the Gospel which they demonstrated by enduring persecution for their faith.

How many non-Christian friends do you have? One of the greatest barriers to evangelism is that most believers spend all their time with other Christians. Consequently, they have no clue as to how the non-Christian looks at the world. The influential witness is that Christian who has established redemptive relationships with non-Christians.

Andrew and Philip's response after Jesus' call to discipleship illustrates this. The first thing Andrew did was to tell his brother Simon (Peter) about meeting Jesus. "...and he brought him to Jesus" (John

1:40-42). There was also Philip, who ran to tell his friend, Nathaniel, "We have found the one ... come and see" (John 1:44-46). Their desire to share what had happened to them was spontaneous, simple, and direct.

People respond to the Gospel in various ways. Some ignore it; some ridicule it; some even persecute those who proclaim it. As a result, Satan often blinds us with the fear of rejection, that our efforts will be fruitless. Our response to Satan is the promise of God's presence and his deep desire to bring others to him.

Receiving the word — the beginning (v. 13a). The mission team's prayer of gratitude referred to the fact that the Thessalonians had objectively received (heard) the word of

Scoper

God, then had accepted (welcomed) it subjectively, not as the word of mere men, but as the incredible word of God.

Here we catch a glimpse of Paul's consciousness of his God-given authority, because his preaching was not the outgrowth of any philosophical meanderings, but was firmly rooted in Paul's revelation from the Lord himself.

Working of the word — the empowering (v. 13b). Many of the Thessalonian believers' friends had dismissed Paul's message as the "word of men." However, because the believers had been open and responsive to the Gospel of God when it was preached, their transformed lives confirmed that this Gospel was indeed the work of God. The same is true for today's Christian.

Salvation at its point of beginning is a matter of hearing the Gospel, receiving what is heard, and accepting the message as the word of God.

Continuing in the faith — the enduring (vv. 14-16). Paul

commended the Thessalonian church for enduring persecution similar to that of the Judean churches.

In this passage we need to understand that though Paul specifically denounced the Jews, whose persecution he himself had experienced, all Christians will ultimately face a similar end. The reason for the Jews' opposition to the gospel was Paul's insistence of the inclusions of Gentiles in the church.

As Paul catalogs the errors and sins of his kinsmen, the Jews, he opened a window on his own background as a Jew. He interpreted his persecution at the hands of the Jews as a part of the nation's history of rebellion against God, establishing a pattern of hostility, of which the persecution in Thessalonica was a part.

We must also remind ourselves that when Paul referred to the Jews he undoubtedly had in mind the national religious leaders, the Pharisees. From Explore the Bible Adult Commentary we read: "Paul himself was a Jew (Phil. 3:4-6). He highly valued his Jewish

heritage (Rom. 3:1-2). He yearned for his fellow Jews to be saved (Rom. 9:1-3), and prayed earnestly for their salvation (Rom. 10:1).

Paul did not possess a spirit of anti-Semitism. The simple truth is that all persecutors of Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, will face God's wrath. Furthermore, God did not condemn all Jews as a people; he had in view those who violently and willfully opposed the gospel." By their opposition the Jews were "heaping up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come on them at last" (2:16b).

A personal testimony — A life of sensibility, security, and stability is built upon the fact of who Jesus is and what he did for me. How thankful I am for this firm foundation in the midst of a world that is floundering, thankful enough to want to share with others the source of my strength, Jesus, who give me the impetus to face this world as a faithful servant.

Scoper is a member of First Church, Laurel.

IMB report pinpoints lostness of world

First of a two-part series

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — All the resources of the modern mission movement didn't get the news of Jesus to one

Asian village soon enough to save the lives of three young boys.

A Christian worker preached the Gospel for the first time in the village earlier this year. The local chief sadly asked him, "Why did you not come here two weeks earlier?"

The chief explained that a sorcerer had promised him prosperity if he would sacrifice three small children.

"I was carried away by his words and kidnapped two 5-year-old boys from a neighboring village, and I sacrificed them to the gods," he confessed, "but I failed in all my attempts in kidnapping the third child. Finally, I took my 7-year-old son and sacrificed him also."

"If you had told me about this Jesus a little earlier, then I would have never killed those innocent children."

"Why did you come so late?" The chief asked again, weeping bitterly.

The worker could have offered several valid reasons: that the village is just one of countless communities in an unreached region, that its people are controlled by ancient superstitions, that local leaders are hostile to Christianity, that the national government opposes missionary activity.

At the time, however, silence seemed the only appropriate response. Multiply this scene millions of times over for a rough idea of the challenge facing Christians who seek to obey Jesus' command to preach the Good News everywhere.

The gap between the biblical vision of world evangelization and reality remains a Grand Canyon-like expanse.

Closing the Gap, a report prepared by strategists at the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB), takes a big-picture snapshot of the secular and spiritual state of the world.

It also examines the "scope and range of God's resources" among his followers — and asks some hard questions about how to bring evangelistic vision and reality closer together.

The report's findings include:

CLUSTERS OF LOSTNESS

About 600 million people claim a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ, leaving about 1.4 billion "cultural Christians" who associate in some way with the Christian religion but don't necessarily follow Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Another 2.5 billion people are non-Christian but have some access to the gospel message by various means.

More than 1.6 billion people, meanwhile, have virtually no access to the gospel, a church, Scripture, or followers of Christ.

More than 2,100 of the world's nearly 13,000 distinct people groups fall into the last category.

Forty-one countries have populations that are more than 99% non-Christian; 45 more are close behind.

The highest concentrations of lostness

span the so-called "10-40 Window" from North Africa to Southeast Asia. Not surprisingly, most of the countries with fewer than 10 missionaries per 1 million lost people are in this region.

"If we are to reach the world's more than 5 billion lost persons, how many missionaries and resources can we afford to deploy to countries, cities, and people groups that already have thriving evangelical populations?" the report asks.

"Can we afford not to partner with like-minded evangelical brothers and sisters wherever we find them? How can we mobilize these Great Commission collaborators to take the gospel to a lost and needy world?"

BIG RELIGION, NO RELIGION

Nearly a third of the world's people identify themselves — or are identified by others — as "Christian."

Islam claims more than 1 billion adherents. Hinduism has 800 million followers.

Buddhism, with 350 million adherents, is experiencing a surge of growth.

The third-largest bloc behind Christianity and Islam, however, is the 900 million people who profess no faith at all — including "post-Christian secularists in Europe, post-communist atheists in Asia, materialists, humanists, and hedonists scattered around the world," the report notes.

A WORLD OF CITIES

More and more people are jamming into cities, a trend that will accelerate as global economics and communications drive mass migrations to urban centers.

This year alone more than 10 million people will leave poverty-stricken rural areas of China in search of work.

In India, rural flooding, drought and poverty may push 300 million people — more than the entire population of the United States — into already-packed cities over the next 20 years, according to the Asian Development Bank.

Cities present plenty of challenges, but "we can find most of the world's people groups living in some urban enclave" — even members of the hardest-to-reach groups as they flood cities looking for jobs and education.

"How can we turn these opportunities for access into gateways for people group evangelism?" the report asks.

To be continued in next week's issue

WORLD OF CITIES

Members of people groups hard to reach with the Gospel are flooding the world's cities. Missions strategists are looking for ways to turn these opportunities for access into people group evangelism. (BP photo)

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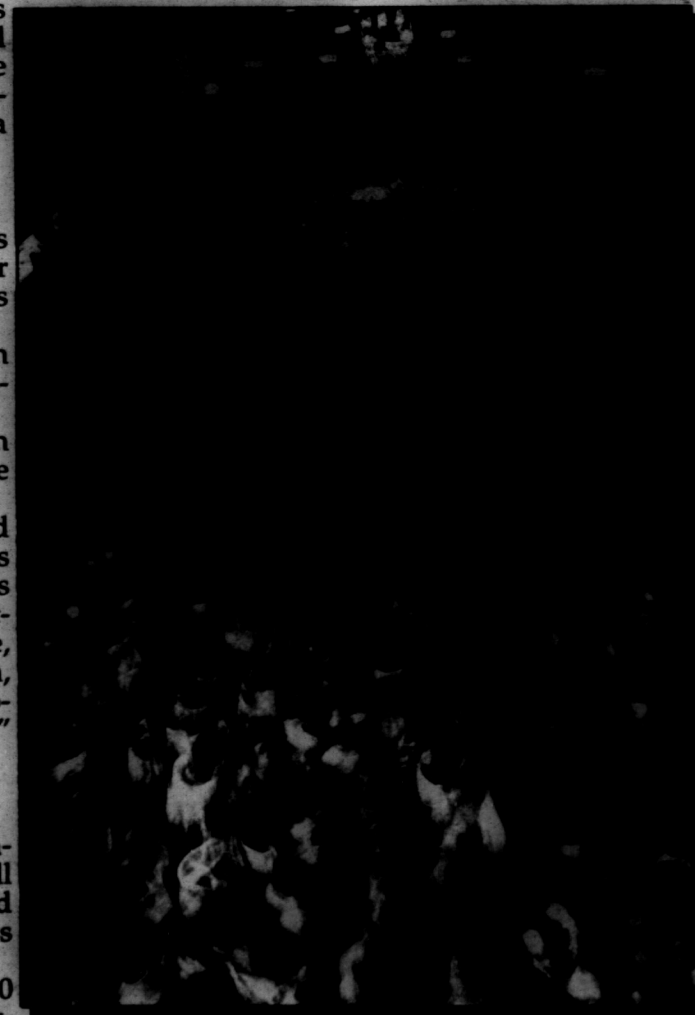
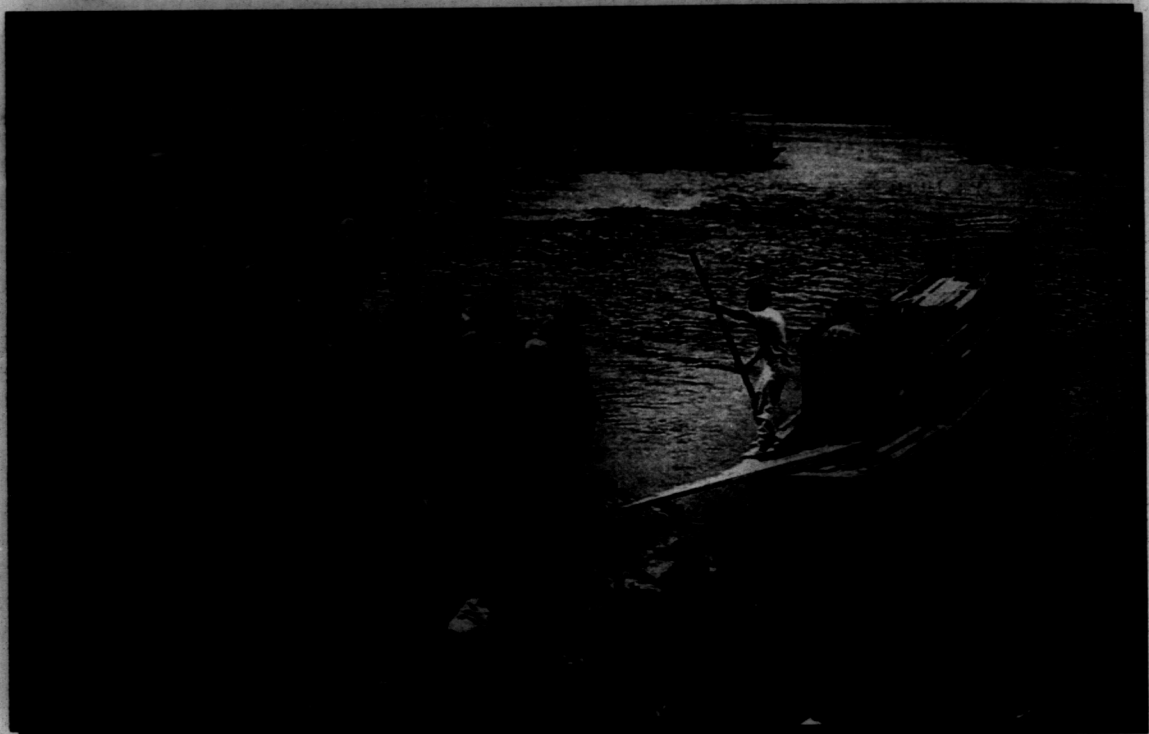
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QDTURQ USS KJQDQ
KJHLZD KJUK DJUSS
TNWQ KN RUDD, ULC
KN DKULC MQBNXQ KJQ
DNL NB WUL.

SOFQ KGQLKV-NLQ:

KJHXKV-DHP

Clue:

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Seventeen: Twenty-Five.



CLUSTERS OF LOSTNESS — Only about 600 million of the world's 6.1 billion people claim a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Multitudes of souls — like these cult members at Brazil's "Carnaval" festival — are lost to a loving God. More than 1.6 billion people have virtually no access to the gospel, a church, Scripture or followers of Christ. More than 2,100 of the world's nearly 13,000 distinct people groups fall into that category. (Photo by Roy M. Burroughs)